

Rounding out the tallies, 6 whites were arrested for larceny.⁸³

The county commissioners were dominated already by a Democratic majority but were hampered by Fusionists at every turn. The Democrats had regained control of the county after a series of court battles in mid-1898, but they had to rely on Fusionists in the sheriff's office and courts to accomplish any tasks. Since Fusionists and Democrats could not cooperate in bipartisan spirit, very little was accomplished by the board led by Roger Moore. Once the municipal government was under Waddell's command, the county government also worked to eliminate any black presence, to ensure the validity of the coup, and to make adjustments to county appointments to become more effective. Just as resignations of the city's black and Republican leaders and employees were coerced, so were resignations at the county level. By mid-December, most of the Fusionists had submitted their resignations and their replacements had been chosen. One county department, the Board of Education, was thoroughly restructured after the coup. The new board, selected by the county commissioners, met on December 13, and decided that school committees would be comprised "exclusively of white citizens" even for black school districts. All blacks who were on any school committees in the county were expected to resign. M. C. S.

⁸³ An earlier hearing by Waddell as part of his attempts to control municipal crime through his special mayoral court was the hearing of Thomas Lane, the black man accused of firing at the Wilmington Light Infantry. The WLI and white leaders contended that if Lane had not shot at the military, it would have not been necessary for them to kill John Halsey. Lane was convicted and sentenced to jail time. For more information on Halsey's murder, see chapter 5. "Minutes of the Wilmington Board of Aldermen," November, 1898, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.

Noble, white superintendent of schools, also was expected to resign.⁸⁴

Straddling city and county affairs was the Board of Audit and Finance. The board held the purse strings for the city and reported to the county. John Webber, the only black member of the Board of Audit and Finance resigned under duress on November 15. At the meeting where his resignation was accepted, the board, which consisted of H. G. McQueen, C. W. Yates, and S. P. McNair, approved the expenditures of the Board of Aldermen for 100 policemen for a period of 30 days. The board deferred replacement of Webber until a suitable person was identified from the First Ward. The Board of Audit and Finance also accepted formal notice of the resignations of Wright's administration and the election of replacements led by Waddell.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ It is unclear if Noble's resignation was demanded. Noble was the son of a Confederate officer and had earned a reputation throughout the state for excellence in the management of the Wilmington schools. He came to Wilmington in 1882 to serve as superintendent of the city schools and earned acclaim for his progressive educational models. By November 1898, he had recently been invited to return to Chapel Hill as a professor of pedagogy with the university. It is unclear if he would have continued to serve as city schools superintendent or if the resignation would have been given regardless of the political climate. Regardless of circumstance, with the departure of Noble, Wilmington's schools lost a strong education advocate for both blacks and whites. New Hanover County Board of Commissioners Minutes, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh; *Morning Star* (Wilmington), December 4, 7, 14, 1898; *Evening Dispatch* (Wilmington), December 6, 1898; *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* s.v., "Noble, Marcus Cicero Stephens."

⁸⁵ *Morning Star* (Wilmington), November 16, 1898; New Hanover County Board of Commissioners Minutes, State Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh.